

VZCZCXRO2866

PP RUEHLN RUEHVK RUEHYG
DE RUEHDBU #0608 0951146

ZNR UUUUU ZZH

P R 051146Z APR 06

FM AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7114

INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE

RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC

RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC

RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 1500

RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 1524

RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 1509

RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 1480

RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 1426

RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1464

RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 1437

RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 1349

RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 1280

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC

RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL

RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE

RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1064

RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 1500

RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 1545

RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS 0857

RUEHDBU/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE 8290

UNCLAS DUSHANBE 000608

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STATE FOR SCA/CEN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KFLU](#) [ECON](#) [EAGR](#) [EAID](#) [TBIO](#) [SENV](#) [KSCA](#)

KSTH, SOCI, WHO, TI

SUBJECT: TAJIKISTAN: LAB TESTS CONFIRM STILL NO AVIAN FLU

¶1. Although the media have reported an increased number of bird deaths in Tajikistan, lab tests confirm the dead birds were not afflicted by avian influenza. On April 4, the State Veterinarian Service revealed that the most recent tests of pigeons and other dead birds in Dushanbe were negative for avian influenza. The birds were collected from the grounds of the Tajik Transport Institute in Dushanbe. Although officials could not explain the exact cause of death, they suggested the birds could have died from radiation due to the large number of satellite dishes on rooftops.

¶2. In mid-March, a group of Tajik officials headed by Chief of the State Veterinary Services, Mulujon Amirbekov visited the Tigrovaya Balka nature preserve and the nearby towns of Kumsanghir and Jilikul in southern Tajikistan to collect 13 blood samples from poultry in ten households. They also took samples from poultry at the Russian Military's 201 division site. Veterinary Department officials explain these poultry deaths are due to Newcastle disease. Birds in the same region, vaccinated against Newcastle disease did not die. The region borders Afghanistan where incidents of avian influenza have been reported and the media speculated poultry in the region have been dying because of avian influenza. At the opposite end of the country, officials have collected 600 samples from birds in the northern Sughd region and are awaiting test results.

¶3. COMMENT: According to worrisome media reports, there has been a marked increase in bird deaths, and ill-informed speculations such as "death by satellite-dish radiation" are not satisfactory or adequate. Given that Tajikistan's neighbors, Afghanistan and China, have reported incidents of avian influenza, the possibility remains high that avian influenza could reach - or has reached - Tajikistan. The Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Health Organization continue to work with the Tajik government to monitor potential avian influenza. The media actively reports on potential cases, and the government appears proactive in collecting samples for

testing, but continued observation from international organizations is needed to ensure that the government does not attempt to cover up an outbreak as they may have done with last summer's outbreak of "acute waterborne diarrhea." END COMMENT.

HOAGLAND